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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, February 25, 1935.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Meals for the Puppy." Information from the Bureau of Animal Industry, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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We've been spending our Mondays talking about food for ourselves or our children. Today for a change let's discuss diets for the youngsters in the dog family. According to dog experts in the Bureau of Animal Industry, little Rover needs his vitamins and minerals, his properly balanced and digestible foods, just as little Junior does.

Since dog owners can now learn from scientists how to care for and feed their young dogs, don't be surprised if you hear some happy day that puppy mortality has decreased and that growing dogs are no longer under-nourished or afflicted with digestive trouble as many of them are today.

Well, from what the experts tell me, feeding a puppy properly is quite like feeding a human baby.

For one thing, you should start early in the puppy's life to teach him to like many different foods, just as you must do with a baby. While he is still living chiefly on his mother's milk, he can acquire a taste for the simple foods that later will make up his menus. For example, when he is only four weeks old, he should start trying a little taste of ground meat one day, a little bit of dry bread softened with broth or milk another day, and so on. If he learns to like these foods early, then the separation from his mother won't come as a painful shock that makes him go "off feed" as so many little puppies now do.

The usual age to wean a puppy is six weeks. At this time he should be familiar with liquid, solid and soft foods. A puppy at this age needs a good deal of nourishment, but he hasn't the space inside to accommodate large amounts at a time. So his meals should be small but frequent. For a month or so after weaning, your puppy should have six meals a day. Gradually, he'll be able to take more at each meal and to eat less often. By the time he is a year old, he can have one or two or three meals a day, depending on his needs and your convenience.

But let's get back to the matter of the puppy's menu when he first leaves his original milk diet. Half his rations will be meat or such substitutes as cow's milk, eggs or some boneless fish like salmon. The other half will be divided between vegetables and cereal foods. On moderate exercise, he needs about this proportion of varied foods every day. A more active dog may need more meat; a quiet dog less food. And remember this always: if you prepare your dog's food yourself or if you feed him with food from your table, you can be sure his diet is wholesome and nourishing.

Fats, sweets and starchy vegetables like potatoes are on the black list for the puppy. His digestion won't take care of them. The meat he eats should be ground or minced lean meat like beef or lamb or mutton. You can feed him meat scraps from your table or the low-cost lean cuts. And you can serve it to him either cooked or raw. If you cook it, better boil or broil it; never fry it or cook it in fat. And be sure the meat is fresh. Many people don't seem to realize that spoiled or moldy or tainted food is no better for dogs than human beings -- in fact, that it has caused the illness and death of many a fine dog.

Eggs are another good protein food for your puppy. And the best way to serve them is in egg-nog. Puppy egg-nogg, of course, contains no sugar or flavoring. It's simply raw egg mixed in milk.

As for vegetables, your little dog should learn early to eat his vegetables like the rest of the family. He needs them for their minerals and vitamins and for their bulk. And he can eat them either raw or cooked. Tomatoes and beets are some of the best vegetables for dogs. Most dogs can also eat carrots, onions and cabbage, though they all differ about the vegetables they do best on. Peas and beans have too tough skins for puppies though older dogs can often eat them. Potatoes, as we said, are too starchy for any dog. Better chop the vegetable up with the meat so the puppy can't nose them out. Like most human youngsters, puppies will avoid eating their vegetables if they can.

Dry bread, dog biscuit, and whole wheat biscuit moistened in milk, water or meat broth will provide the puppy with the cereal food he needs. Of course, when he's very young, you'll have to break up and moisten his hard bread or biscuit. But don't add so much liquid that the food is sloppy. And, of course, never serve him moldy or mildewed bread.

Your puppy like any other baby needs his codliver oil, especially in dark cold weather. Start him out as you do the baby on only a few drops a day and gradually increase until he is taking from one or two teaspoons or tablespoons daily mixed with his food. Large puppies need more codliver oil than little dogs.

Here's an important point about young dogs and bones. The experts say that gnawing meat off a big bone that won't splinter is good for a puppy. It helps his teething and also his digestion. But never allow him to have splintery bones or small bones like chicken or fish bones. These may stick in his throat or puncture his digestive organs. And there's no use leaving an old bone about with a dog. It's likely to start fights or cause broken teeth.

One last point. Remember that water has a definite place in the proper menu for the puppy. He should have a bowl of cool fresh water waiting and ready for him at all times.

To sum up, the daily diet for the modern young dog includes a variety -- chopped lean meat; chopped vegetables, especially tomatoes and beets; dry bread or puppy biscuit moistened; cod liver oil; plenty of clear water to drink. Avoid fats, sweets, starchy or indigestible vegetables, small or sharp bones, and any food that is spoiled or molded. And remember that if you give a puppy scraps from your own table or food you fix yourself, you are sure he's eating wholesome balanced meals.

Puppies like children thrive on regular meals and need peaceful, undisturbed surroundings while they eat. Also they thrive on cleanliness, so be sure their dishes are washed after every meal and that any food left is discarded.

